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Newsletter No 158

April 2007

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### BGS News

First of all, please note the date of the April meeting - it is not on the usual 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday as this is the Easter weekend this year, instead we meet on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>. What hasn't changed is the time and venue - 7.30 pm at South Hill Park.

In April we continue our preparation for the visit to the Spanish Circle on Friday May 27<sup>th</sup>. This gives us another opportunity to work up our "orchestral" pieces and also to have a go at solos - if you have something you would like to play at the Circle,

then bring it along to give it an airing. If any members would like to team up with others for an ensemble, that's fine but that's left to individuals to organise.

It would be as well to add at this point that for fairly obvious reasons what we play on May 27<sup>th</sup> should have a Spanish flavour, although that description can be extended to include Latin American music which we do know also goes down rather well. Ideally, we're also meant to provide some info about the music we play - in Spanish of course!

If you can't make the Spanish Circle in May, then just bring along something to play to the April meeting - doesn't matter what it is!

### Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> March

Our March meeting saw us attempt a novel combination for a Society evening, as we sought to fit in an Orchestra session before the main event, a performance from the Rosewood Trio.

The evening got off to an excellent start as we were able to welcome four new players, Chris Cook, Alison Sinclair, Liz Wilson and Debbie Dwane. Welcome to you all. In addition, it was good to meet Richard Shearing, an original member of the Rosewood Trio who had come along for the evening all the way from Birmingham with his guitar and joined in the playing.

The Orchestra segment of the meeting saw us have a first go at 2 pieces intended for performance at the Spanish Circle, both being arrangements by Derek Hasted. First was "La Bamba", a very familiar tune from younger days which only needed a couple of attempts under Gary Jordan's guidance to get it sounding something like it should, Next we attempted "Ay Ay", an unfamiliar piece with some more challenging rhythms which again found us up to the mark, this time with Richard Butters taking the baton, Gary having gone for a last minute rehearsal of the Trio.

There's plenty of work to do to lick these properly into shape, but I think we all found them fun to play.

The opportunity to play a solo was only taken up by Allan du Feu, who gave us Petite Piece by no less than W A Mozart.

After a longer interval than usual we reconvened in the Dance Studio to be joined by a goodly number of "Friends of the Rosewoods" to hear the Trio perform.

Most of us have heard the Rosewood Trio before and were therefore familiar with Gary Jordan in this role and also with Mike Hinchliff, however we were also pleased to be able to welcome a new member of the Trio, Orsolya Pataki (aka "Orshy"), all the way from Hungary and making her first public performance in front of a British audience.

Mike introduced the first piece on the programme, Paolo Bellinati's Baiao de Gude, a piece founded on the traditional folk rhythms of north east Brazil and referring to the game of marbles played in this relatively poor region of the country. The rhythmic formulation certainly came across in the Trio's performance, as did the jazz influences brought to the piece by Bellinati.



*The Rosewood Trio - Mike Hinchliff (left), Orsolya Pataki and (right) Gary Jordan.*

We next moved closer to home, I have to admit being somewhat confused when I saw Ivan Andrews' Berkshire Suite on the programme with some unfamiliar movement names and promptly confused it with the pieces that we recently played with Ivan. It turns out that this Suite dates back to Ivan's time with the Society before he moved to the west country, the names of the 3 sections referring to locations in Caversham where Ivan lived and the music being written specifically for trio. A very busy but tuneful Broad Street was followed by a restful Clayfield Copse before the pace picked up again with Caversham Park. The Rosewoods certainly managed to convey the intended atmosphere of each location as described by Mike in his remarks beforehand.

We then had Fin de Siglo by the Argentinian composer Maximo Diego Pujol, a piece based on the Tango intended as a tribute to Piazzola. Pujol is my own favourite

composer, and I thoroughly enjoyed this performance of a work that I hadn't heard before.

This was followed by an unexpected treat, as the audience eventually realised after the unfamiliar introduction that they were listening to an arrangement for guitar trio of Teddy Bear's Picnic which made a hugely enjoyable piece to end on.

Congratulations to the Rosewood Trio on an excellent performance, much appreciated by all present.

### **John Mills and Cobie Smit**

It was encouraging to see almost all seats filled in the Recital Room in anticipation for the welcome return of John Mills and Cobie Smit on 3rd March. The committee and performers had been assured that the rock band warming up in the bar below would cease their activities from 7:30 and all parties were relieved that they held their promise.

John and Cobie opened with a snappy little Baroque number by Soler, demonstrating the great sense of phrasing and control that would be the hallmark of the rest of the evening. An arrangement of a concerto by Marcello followed: I was particularly impressed by the dynamic buildup in the introduction to the tranquil adagio. Then came some more familiar works, a JS Bach chorale, a Partita by Telleman and Carulli's Serenade op 96 to close the first half. I particularly enjoyed the latter piece, with warm chords punctuated by brilliant sequences.



*John and Cobie after their performance, with (left ) Gavin Smith and Steve Christmas and (right) Debbie Haeck.*

John was playing a guitar by Paul Fisher, made as part of Paul's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary series, and the instrument sounded as magnificent as it looked. Cobie's guitar was also a recent model by Bert Kwakkel. John explained that he had broken his tour of Finland to play for us - when he left Finland, the temperature was somewhere around minus

30, so the thought of bringing his usual concert guitar back into our 'warm' country for a single performance was out of the question.

The concert resumed with Boccherini's intro and fandango featuring an exquisite ponticello from John played over Cobie's rich bass accompaniment - a very effective combination.

Then came Ray Burley's arrangements of some of the Spanish Dances by Granados - The Oriental gave Cobie a chance to get the melody whilst John relished the underlying arpeggios. The concert drew to a close on a strong tango theme with pieces by Pujol and Piazzola.

In summary the concert was a great showcase of well chosen pieces with some fine examples of ensemble playing and was much appreciated by the audience.

Gary Jordan, March 2007

## Woodley Festival

Thanks also to Gary Jordan for the following.

"It was with some trepidation that I entered my adult evening class into the open section of Woodley Festival held earlier this month. I have been threatening to do this for some time, but on seeing the very high standard and very low age of the other entrants on the big day, I began to have doubts as to my sanity (as have others on many occasion).

The group, a trio that included BGS member Allan du Feu, had practiced hard for this event so I was convinced that entering had been beneficial even if they didn't actually take part. Even so, a few dodgy pre-performance run-throughs made me consider shortening the programme to the one piece that they were fully confident with, however they courageously went ahead with plan A - two short pieces from the copious pen of Derek Hasted.

After a nail-bitingly long wait for their spot, the group gave a confident performance, particularly as the audience of around 20 turned out to be much larger than I had suggested to them. The adjudicator, a professional 'cellist, provided some very helpful comments, and noted how good it was to hear adults playing for the fun of making music together. The festival organizer later reiterated this thought pointing that "it can be a bit of a surprise to some [children] to see that adults enjoy playing too (as opposed to seeing them as music teachers)."

Well done Allan, and the rest of the team, and I look forward to similar success next year!"



*Gary's group at the Woodley festival, with our own Allan du Feu (centre)*

Gary would like to hear from anyone interested in joining his guitar ensemble evening class. Enthusiasm is more important than playing ability, however this class would not be suitable for complete beginners. The group meet on Monday evenings from 7:45 in Earley (not far from the A329(M) Junction at Winnersh).

If you're interested, contact Gary direct:

[GaryJordan@merigale.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:GaryJordan@merigale.fsnet.co.uk)

## Juan Martin

One of the top flamenco guitarists in the world, Juan Martin, is coming to Reading on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June, together with supporting cast of musicians and dancers. Full details can be found at

<http://www.readingarts.com/concerthall/whatson>

For the real Flamenco aficionados I'm told there's a workshop with Juan Martin, further details not available at the time of writing but hopefully to come.